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Instructor Lori Thomas records Elmer Pack's pulse rate before the exercises begin.

For healthy hearts Exercising on the road back to recovery

By Lorraine McClish
staff writer

AT 6 P.M. ON ANY Monday, Wednesday or Thursday, exercisers begin to fill up the tunnel that connects Botsford Hospital to its Administration and Education Center. They will spread throughout the carpeted tunnel for their warm-up, getting ready for Lori Thomas to put them through their hour-long paces.

All of the exercisers are in what is known as Phase 3 of cardio-rehabilitation.

They passed Phase 1 when they were able to walk on their own, released from a hospital after heart attacks, heart surgery or any type of heart problem.

They graduated from Phase 2 after intensive education and monitoring under the supervision of nurses and physical therapists in Cardiovascular Health Associates on their way back in the recovery process.

There is no graduation from Phase 3.

"As long as you are in Phase 3 you are either going to maintain or improve your physical fitness," Thomas said. "A lot of what we do in Phase 2 is motivate our clients to get them into Phase 3 and keep them there, motivate them to keep up the exercises."

"The American Heart Association recommends a 30-minute period of exercise three times a week for maximum cardio-fitness - everybody, not just heart patients," said

Dr. John R. Schaller who heads up the rehabilitation package for Cardiovascular Health Associates. "Yet if we're going to have a drop-out at all, we're going to lose him as soon as he's passed Phase 2."

THOMAS SAID her clients are "feeling pretty good about themselves and their world after they leave Phase 2."

Beginning on a one-to-one basis and graduating into therapy and lecture sessions in groups not larger than four, the heart patient knows a considerable amount about the way his or her heart is working. The patient has learned behavior modification, the likelihood of future problems, stress management.

He or she has learned about diet, nutrition, how to get back to home and job without risk and how to reduce whatever risk factors are facing the individual. They have listened to an untold number of lectures all related to heart disease.

"When they leave Phase 2 they are on their own. Some continue with an exercise program, but I'm sorry to say most don't do anything," Thomas said.

"There is a 20 percent reduction in mortality if you continue on a regular exercise regimen after passing Phase 2," Schaller said. "That is a suggestive percentage, not a conclusive one. We can't promise you that you are going to live longer if you continue exercising, but I can promise you that it will improve the quality of your life."

"The exercisers in my class are all



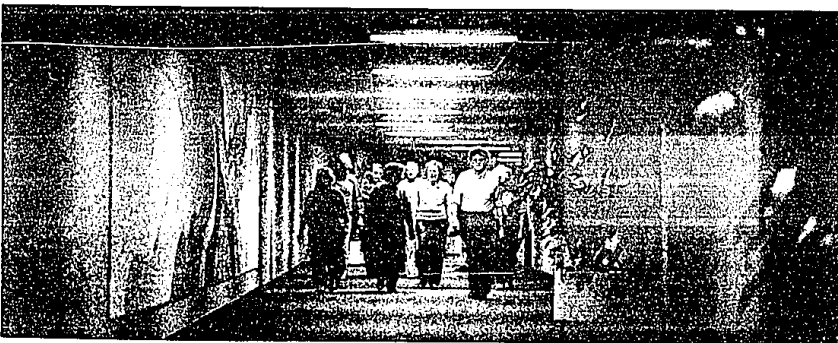
When the walking exercises are completed Lori Thomas shows her students how the next exercise is to be done.

helping one another keep on the right path," Thomas said. "They've all been through the same thing, all been afraid to do anything at all after their heart was damaged for whatever reason, all gone through the same therapy and now are all realizing new benefits."

"By continuing on in a group with

those who have a common problem they are much more likely to stop smoking, much more likely to be reminded of their weight and their diet, and keep conscious of maintaining a lifestyle that isn't going to cause them any future problems."

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Exercisers begin their workout with a walk through the carpeted tunnel that connects Botsford Hospital to its administration building.



Charles Blackman checks his pulse after completing one exercise and before beginning the next.

'We can't promise you that you are going to live longer if you continue exercising, but I can promise you that it will improve the quality of your life.'

— Dr. John R. Schaller

Staff photos by Randy Borst

Stress

There are some healthy and some not-so-healthy ways to cope

By Julie Brown
staff writer

There are good ways and bad ways of coping with stress.

Healthy ways of coping with stress include exercising, participating in recreational activities and talking things out. Even crying can help.

"Crying is really important," said Carolyn Stark, director of the Catherine McAuley Health Center Employee Assistance Program.

"Sometimes it's hard for people to give themselves permission to cry," Stark said during a Wednesday afternoon program at the Canton Recreation Center.

Unhealthy ways of coping include overeating, ignoring the problem or taking it out on others. Abusing drugs and drinking too much alcohol are also unhealthy ways of coping.

"Alcohol is so readily available and so promoted as a way to cope when you're having pressure," Stark said during a Wednesday afternoon program at the Canton Recreation Center.

Stark's presentation, "Depression: How to Keep From Staying Down," was part of a Wednesday afternoon program at the Canton Recreation Center.

IN ADDITION to her presentation, Canton Seniors are lunch and enjoyed a performance by the Canton Seniors Kitchen Band. Hypertension screening, courtesy of the Oakwood Hospital Volunteer Guild, was also part of the day's activities.

Stark talked about the difference between ongoing depression and the normal ups and downs of daily life. Depression involves long-term feelings of hopelessness, helplessness and despair.

"I'm not talking about feelings of sadness, which come and go for everyone," Stark said.

Depression may involve a grief reaction, such as that following the loss of a loved one. A person dealing with such a loss will go through several stages.

Feelings of denial will be followed by those of anger. Hopelessness and despair will then appear, followed by feelings of guilt and eventual relative acceptance of the loss.

Although some people are devastated by such a loss and can't function, others will appear to be much more in control of things, Stark said. Each person's method of coping with such a loss is different.

Those who are dealing with a

short-term crisis may wish to get professional help, she said. Friends, family and church can also help people cope with such crises.

"It passes, and the person recovers. They go on with their life."

ONGOING DEPRESSION involves a number of symptoms, Stark said. Those include reduced productivity, loss of appetite, isolation and withdrawal from people and a number of other symptoms.

In some cases, depression is treated with anti-depressant medications, Stark said, but for most situations, such medications aren't needed. A tranquilizer, such as Valium, may be given for a short time.

"These kinds of drugs can lead to dependency," the use of such drugs should be closely monitored to avoid dependency, she said.

For more severe mood swings associated with manic-depressive disorders, lithium carbonate may be used.

"That has to be closely monitored by a physician because it's a very strong drug with side effects."

Depression associated with drug use can involve prescription drugs. Some blood pressure medications

can contribute to depression. It's important to report such reactions to a doctor, Stark said.

Learning to cope with stress is a lifelong process, according to Stark. Building up coping skills is essential.

SOME RESEARCH has shown that depression can weaken the body's immune system.

"It's just another way of keeping healthy."

The stress cycle begins with a stressful event. Such events aren't always negative, according to Stark. A promotion on the job or a vacation, for example, can be a source of stress.

People's thoughts, beliefs and perceptions about such stressful events have a lot to do with their reactions, she said. Response to stress can include physical signs — such as a driver's increased heartbeat following a near-miss on the expressway.

In such short-term stressful situations, the stress passes and the person recovers. Long-term stress, however, means that the stress response is constantly being activated. Headaches, fatigue, nervousness and depression are likely results.

It's important to be aware of the early symptoms of depression, according to Stark.

"That's when you really need to take some action steps to find out what the problem is."

COPING WITH such stressful events can include changing your thoughts, beliefs and perceptions. Changing your attitudes has a lot to do with changing reactions, she said.

It's also possible to change your physiology, Stark said. Relaxation techniques, a well-balanced diet, meditation and exercise can help people cope more effectively with stress.

Changing your environment is also a way to cope. A trip south to a warmer location, for example, can help lift your spirits this time of year.

"Changing your environment may also mean improving the relationships with others," Stark said. Changing relationships with other people — by learning to be assertive, for example — can help.

It's easy to feel all alone in the world, Stark said. It's important to remember, however, that others may feel the same way.

"Maybe you really need to pick up the phone and make the first move," Stark's presentation on depression was followed by a performance by the Canton Seniors Kitchen Band, one of several activities held throughout the day during the Wednesday open house.

The open house was held to recognize the renovations made at the Canton Recreation Center, said Diane Nelhengen, senior citizens coordinator for Canton Township.

A back room was added to the center, and its kitchen and bathrooms were renovated with funds received from the Michigan Office of Services to the Aging and community development block grants.

The renovation work began in the late spring of 1986 and was completed in the fall, Nelhengen said. There had been talk about holding the open house before Christmas, but a decision was made to wait until after the holidays.

Approximately 125 people came to the open house at the Canton Recreation Center.

"It's been very busy, but it's been very satisfying," she said of the day's celebration.